

A Walking Tour Of Historic and Architectural Resources In and Near The Downtown In Watertown NY

See Map for Accompanying Numbered Locations

1. Beginning at the corner of Arsenal and Sherman Streets, The Jefferson County Courthouse stands – a red brick, limestone trimmed two-story structure. This building is the last survivor of three nearly identical structures in New York State, designed by Syracuse architect, Horatio Nelson White.
 2. Slightly to the east the former Post Office building marks the beginning of the Public Square Historic District, encompassing all of the Public Square and the first block each of Court, Arsenal, State, Franklin and Washington Streets.
- The Public Square District includes 63 contributing buildings (predominantly commercial), a village green, and one monument. The buildings date from the late 1840s on the north of the square, to the early 1930s and include Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Neoclassical and Art Deco styles.
- 3-6 A few very good examples of Art Deco exist at (3) 117 Arsenal Street, (4) Empsall's at 122-130 Court Street, and (5) the Lincoln Building at 95 Public Square. The striking Art Moderne Smith & Percy building (6) at 104-106 Washington Street was a popular style in the 1930s.
 - 7-8 The eastern end of the Public Square is dominated by the Richardson Romanesque First Baptist Church (7) while the western end is known for the 1920s Woolworth Building (8) erected by Frank W Woolworth on the site of his first venture into the 5 & 10 cent business (a counter at the earlier Moore & Smith store).

9. The keystone to the Public Square area is without a doubt the 1850 vintage Paddock Arcade. The Arcade is characterized by its 174 foot long vaulted gallery with second floor offices open to a balcony overlooking the retail first floor. Said to have been inspired by the famed Beauharnais Arcade in Paris, the structure was designed by local architect Otis Wheelock, designer of the First Presbyterian Church, Iron Block, and several other buildings, no longer standing, including the Woodruff House. Wheelock was a noted designer involved in the national drive to set professional standards for engineers and architects.
10. At the center of Public Square lies the island, which was originally the village green. Dating from a gift in 1805, the park is most noted for the central iron cast fountain erected to mark the City's incorporation in 1869. At the western end stands the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument topped by Victory, marking the end of the Civil War.
11. At the start of Washington Street stands the Augustus St Gaudens statue of Roswell Pettibone Flower, Governor of New York at the turn of the century. The Flower family was responsible for many of the high style structures in the City, including the Library and the Taylor mansion on Clinton Street.
12. This end of Public Square district is also home to two buildings tied to the history of the Agricultural Insurance Company, a leading local-based insurer for over a century. The 1876 Marble Block is an extravagant townhouse style originally capped with a statue of Ceres, goddess of Agriculture (now topping the artesian water building on outer Gifford Street Road).
13. The 1920s Neoclassical structure built to the north of the Library to meet its growing needs is the second of the two buildings tied to the history.
14. Emma Flower Taylor, daughter of Roswell P Flower, donated the landmark Public Library named for her father. The white marble building in Beaux Arts style was designed by Watertown architect Addison F Lansing, whose work was influenced by his earlier association with the firm of McKim, Mead & White in New York City.

The interior of this structure is as important as its exterior with murals and paintings of local themes as a well as allegorical exposition. Much of the art was executed by the Lamb Studios (also responsible for the work at Sage, Wellesley and Cornell). The most significant feature is the three story domed rotunda with allegories of various branches of learning. Tours of normally restricted areas can be arranged with Staff.

- 15 Across the street the Masonic Temple commands a view of the Washington Street boulevard. Access throughout the 1915 period building is by ramp rather than stairs. The proud Greek Neoclassical portico leads to a mosaic floored entry and huge brass and leather doors.
- 16 "Large and Victorian" for him, "Swiss Chalet" for her. The Paddocks – Edwin and Olive – built and occupied the house at 228 Washington Street from 1876 to 1922. Paddock, so of Loveland, builder of the Arcade, was a local banker. The house was designed and built by John Hose, also responsible for the construction of the County Court House. Upon Mrs. Paddock's death in 1922, the house was left to the Jefferson County Historical Society and is open to the public. Many of the rooms retain original Paddock furnishings.
- 17 The Victorian Garden at the rear of the house, designed by James Beckler of the Smithsonian Institute was a gift of the North Country Community Foundation in 1982. Just behind the garden you'll see a rescued original log cabin from St Lawrence County, one of the earliest found yet. It was being used as a storage shed and dismantled and reassembled for public viewing and appreciation.
- 18 The Massey House at the rear of the property was used by the Paddock coachman and his family. Believed to be built in about 1802, it is considered to be the oldest structure in the county. The house may have stood at the front of the property on the site of the current house. It was moved to its present location about 1876 and connected to the icehouse and barn built to serve the Paddock mansion. It now serves as the home of the director of the Jefferson County Historical Society.
- 19 Trinity Episcopal Church reached through the parking lot behind the Historical Society, is a massive greystone edifice erected in 1889 when the congregation moved from its original Court Street site. Trinity is considered a particularly high style rendition of the Romanesque style, attributed in part surely to the hiring of New England architect W P Wentworth who was most apt to have been influenced by Richardson's Boston Trinity Church. The Parish House was added in 1912 as a gift from Emma Flower Taylor in memory of her father. In fact, much of the building on the site was financed by the Flower family.
- 20 Clinton Street is the site of a number of high style homes built by the developers and industrialists of the late 19th century and early 20th century. The most outstanding is the Taylor Mansion at 241 Clinton Street. It is one of the most significant structures in the City, both historically and architecturally.
- Built in 1891 as a wedding gift to his daughter from Governor Roswell Flower, the home was designed by the NYC firm of Lamb & Rich with grounds landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. Originally built on 5 acres the property has been divided many times. The original coach house is the current First Methodist Church on Mullin Street. Sadly, the beautiful home intended to provide so much joy saw a great deal of grief such as the death of the older son, a scandalous murder perhaps involving the family as well as staff and the ultimate breakup of the Taylor marriage in 1912. During WW I the house was used as a convalescent home for the Canadian soldiers.

First Presbyterian Church (find the number on the map and follow Washington street south to the next street, which is Academy) at the corner of Washington and Academy is the home of the oldest congregation in Watertown founded in the first decade of the 19th century. The building was designed by Otis Wheelock architect of the rebuilding of Watertown following the disastrous fire of 1849. The church itself was rebuilt in 1851 riding the crest of the sudden growth and rapid development in the City.

The father of the noted Dulles siblings, John, Foster, Allen and Eleanor, was pastor at the church for a number of years as the children grew up here. Robert Lansing, President Wilson's Secretary of State was also a parishioner. The building is noted for its Romanesque and Italianate detailing. Fairly recent renovations have resulted in a handsome interior, highlighting the second level galleries and a Celtic cross within the nave.



